

## Sumatran spitting cobra eating Malaysian wood rat at Sungei Buloh

**Subjects:** Sumatran spitting cobra, *Naja sumatrana* (Reptilia: Serpentes: Elapidae);  
Malaysian wood rat, *Rattus tiomanicus* (Mammalia: Rodentia: Muridae).

**Subjects identified by:** Contributor & Nick Baker.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Migratory Bird Trail; 25 October 2016, around 1116 hrs.

**Habitat:** Mangrove vegetation and prawn ponds.

**Observer:** Contributor.

**Observation:** A spitting cobra of about 1 m total length was observed in the process of swallowing a rat head first (see accompanying pictures).

**Remarks:** The Sumatran spitting cobra is a relatively common venomous snake in Singapore, occurring in forest, scrubland, gardens and around human habitation. It is known to feed on rats and toads and other small vertebrates (Baker & Lim, 2012: 117; Das, 2010: 317). The featured prey is identified as a Malaysian wood rat (*Rattus tiomanicus*) on the basis of its distinctly white underparts and the mangrove habitat. In Singapore, this species of rat inhabits secondary forest, scrubland, plantations and mangroves (Baker & Lim, 2012: 141).

### References:

Baker, N. & K. K. P. Lim, 2012. *Wild Animals of Singapore. A Photographic Guide to Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fishes*. Updated edition. Draco Publishing & Distribution Pte. Ltd. and Nature Society (Singapore). 180 pp.

Das, I., 2010. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-East Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. 376 pp.



Lateral view of spitting cobra swallowing a rat on the ground (left). Closer view showing the head of the cobra over the rear ventral part of the rat (right). Photographs by Uwe Will

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